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Deposited in DRO:

30 January 2017

Version of attached file:

Accepted Version

Peer-review status of attached file:

Peer-reviewed

Citation for published item:

Porter, G. and with Hampshire, K., Abane, A., Munthali, A., Robson, E., Mashiri, M., (2017) 'Young people's daily mobilities in Sub-Saharan Africa : moving young lives.', New York: Palgrave Macmillan. Anthropology, change, and development.

Further information on publisher's website:

<https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-45431-7>

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Additional information:

Sample chapter deposited. Chapter 1: 'Introduction: Children, Young People and the 'Mobilities Turn' in Sub-Saharan Africa', pp. 1-22. DOI: 10.1057/978-1-137-45431-7₁

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Young people's daily mobilities in sub-Saharan Africa. Moving young lives.
London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.

Gina Porter *with* Kate Hampshire, Albert Abane, Alister Munthali, Elsbeth Robson, Mac Mashiri.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION: CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE 'MOBILITIES TURN' IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

This book is about the everyday mobilities and immobilities of young people in sub-Saharan Africa. Young people's daily physical mobility has received remarkably little attention, in African contexts, despite its crucial implications for young lives and life chances. Given that over half of the population of many African countries consists of children and young people under the age of 18, this has been a serious omission. Indeed, although much has been achieved in Africa over the last 15 years through commitment to the Millennium Development Goals, some of the less successful outcomes for children and young people now being reported, as retrospective evaluations take place, can probably be traced back to inadequate recognition of the vital importance of improved mobility and transport for reaching key MDG targets in health, education and gender equity: UNICEF's (2015:iii) reflection that many countries have focused on 'the easiest-to-reach children and communities' has spatial as well as socio-economic implications.

Past failures to adequately recognise the significance of transport, mobility and spatial access to services in young lives have, in part, been due to limited knowledge of their daily mobility patterns and constraints. Although, mobility *per se* in Africa (including migration) has received considerable attention from researchers over the past half a century, published studies of daily mobility with a strong emphasis on children and young people in Africa are rare (Porter 2010) and have mostly tended to focus on single locations – usually cities (Gough 2008 on Lusaka; Lee 2004, Benwell 2009 and van Blerk 2013 on Cape Town; Grieco et al. 1996 and Langevang and Gough 2009 on Accra). In this book, the aim is to bring together diverse strands of a complex African youth mobilities picture and thereby contribute towards filling a knowledge gap which has crucial significance for both policy and practice.

The book builds from the limited relevant literature and a series of field studies conducted intermittently over 40 years in diverse rural and urban regions across Africa and beyond, towards recent more extensive research across 24 sites in three African countries: Ghana, Malawi and South Africa. While some of this earlier work (particularly research conducted in Borno and the Jos Plateau region in Nigeria, South Africa's Eastern Cape, coastal Ghana and the Western Ghats of India) was essential to the identification and development of key themes and effective methodologies, a more recent phase of work (the Child Mobility project, referred to, throughout, as the CM study) forms the core of empirical data presented here. However, the writing is also informed by a much wider range of Africa-focused literature on mobilities, on children and on youth, and by personal field experience in the CM and other Anglophone countries (notably Nigeria, Zambia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho, Ethiopia), some Francophone countries (Cameroon, Chad, Togo, Senegal) and Lusophone Mozambique¹.

Details regarding the various research locations and the development of the innovative methodological approach which has characterised more recent phases of the child mobility research are set out (in Chapter 2), prior to the exploration of key thematic areas (education, work, play, health, transport modes), drawing on extensive empirical evidence, in subsequent chapters. Prior to moving to the field, however, it is important to introduce some of the underlying philosophy, themes and issues which have helped shape this book. The approach is strongly interdisciplinary, intertwining perspectives from Anthropology, Geography, Sociology, African Studies and Transport Planning. It draws on diverse literatures, spanning mobilities, children/young people, gender, inter-generational relations, participatory research and transport studies.

¹ A decade teaching in Nigerian universities, a long series of DFID-funded research projects across Africa, and two years spent advising on transport services for the DFID-funded African Community Development Programme (2012-14) have all been enormously helpful in this respect. While mobilities were not necessarily always the prime focus of this work (which has also included field research on diverse topics from agricultural practices, environmental management, and decentralisation to market trade, NGO activity and refugee lives), it has been consistently underlain by and threaded with attention to and observations of mobility-related factors (from their crucial importance in the shaping of individual lives through to their influence on externally-orchestrated development practices).

There have been significant developments in social science thinking around mobility over the last decade which have had wide cross-disciplinary impact and are helping to bring to the fore some of the key themes explored in the book. These are catalysing new interest in daily mobilities across a considerable span of disciplines and look likely to generate much exciting, innovative new research around the world, including in sub-Saharan Africa. Reflections on this development of the ‘new mobilities paradigm’ lead on, logically, to a wider discussion of the politics of mobility, and to the increasing recognition which is being given to the conceptual and methodological importance of walking. These perspectives help illuminate our understanding of African mobility patterns and their wider impact, but further contextualisation is required, not least with reference to the crucial roles played by age, gender and household composition, the focus of a further section. The review which follows thus identifies key conceptual issues, as a base for their interrogation and elaboration within specific field contexts in ensuing chapters.

The ‘new mobilities paradigm’: building non-Western, youth-focused perspectives

Transport and travel was an unfashionable topic in the social sciences in the later decades of the twentieth century. The largely quantitative treatment given to transportation issues, especially within transport geography, did not sit comfortably with the prevailing postmodern, critical cultural tradition elsewhere. However, the mostly early twenty-first century emergence and coalescence of perspectives which, together, constitute the so-called ‘new mobilities paradigm’, concretised by and encapsulated in Sheller and Urry’s key paper of 2006, has given a very substantial new impetus to research about movement and travel in all its diverse guises. By offering a new entry point into the academic investigation of movement, it has brought a long overdue reinvigoration of transport-related research in the social sciences (particularly in transport geography, arguably its main social science base).

This re-examination of patterns and processes of social change which encompass movement, whether of humans, objects, technologies or scripts, is still gathering pace world-wide. Sheller and Urry (2006) present it as extending from the corporeal mobility of people travelling on a daily basis (the principal focus of this study), to the possibly once-in-a-lifetime migration of refugees (which lies beyond the scope of this book); from the physical movement of bodies and objects, to the virtual mobility of the mobile phone (both of which are considered in this work; see also Urry 2011). The paradigm shift (there is some debate as

to its newness²) took off very rapidly in Western (Anglo-American) contexts but is now beginning to impact on research conducted in sub-Saharan Africa: it is reflected, at least to some degree, in the treatment accorded daily mobilities in this book. While consideration of mobility as a reflection and embodiment of patterns and practices of socio-cultural change arguably has a longer pedigree in Africa and other Southern contexts than in the Global North³, Sheller and Urry's success in developing and promoting mobilities-focused research in the Western academy (discussed further below) has greatly enhanced the profile of the mobilities approach: it is bringing new energies to bear and opening up new avenues of exploration. By drawing together insights into African mobilities built up over many years and reflective engagement with writings now emerging within the 'new mobilities paradigm' in the Global North and South, this book aims to contribute both specifically to a substantially enriched understanding of African mobilities, and - more broadly - to the development of more nuanced understanding of the mobilities paradigm as it is applied worldwide.

The mobilities paradigm, focused on questions, theories and methodologies, as opposed to a 'totalising or reductive description of the contemporary world', puts multiple interacting mobilities at the centre of social change, problematizing sedentarist theories focused on bounded places (Sheller and Urry 2006:210). It ensures that conceptualisations of travel and transport are not reduced to a mere matter of getting between origin and destination, but are about the journey as both a space and a process in which *identities are constructed and reconstructed* within a complex nexus of power relations that shape everyday practices, habits and routines (Bourdieu 1990, Cresswell 2010). This concept of identities being reshaped over time and space – whether gradually or suddenly- is crucial to understanding the trajectories of young people's lives in sub-Saharan Africa. Mobilities are performed, experienced through the body and embedded in social life, as is well illustrated with reference to diverse aspects of young people's mobile lives. Their travel to school, social interactions through physical (and virtual, mobile phone) mobility, and co-option as domestic load carriers by other family members, all offer important insights into a power-laden world in which mobilities encompass much more than a simple journey from A to B. They are

² For instance, note Clifford's (1997) call for engagement with the 'routes' that connect sites.

³ See, for instance, Porter 1988 - 'Perspectives on trade, mobility and gender in a rural market system: Borno, north-east Nigeria' *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie* 79 (2): 82-92. This research is discussed briefly in Chapter 2.

rather a process space, in which identities may be fashioned and refashioned, time and time again. The fluid interdependencies of mobilities – physical and virtual- are particularly evident wherever we encounter the growing uptake of mobile phones among Africa's youth (as in Chapter 5).

However, those *moorings* from which movements are undertaken also need careful consideration (Cresswell 2010): Point A and point B are still-points in everyday mobilities – places from which the traveller goes to, or comes from, or passes time in (whether voluntarily or forcibly). They are key contextual elements in our quest for an understanding of mobility meanings. In the life-worlds of African children, home, school, church, market, farm, workshop, grinding mill, borehole, nightclub, video house, assignation spot for surreptitious meetings, hilltop where a mobile phone network can be accessed, distant forest where firewood is available, are all places strongly imbued with meaning in young people's mobility (and immobility) narratives. They are not only origin or destination points of journeys, but may impact back significantly on the pattern and nature of travel which take place between them, not least when they are the source of loads so heavy that our young pedestrians are transformed into little more than beasts of burden. Power and materiality interact with moorings and movements in complex, sometimes unexpected and occasionally terrible ways: the occasional surreptitious journey to an out-of-bounds nightclub or bar can offer the promise of excitement, new relationships, even a new life; the daily journey to collect water may turn into a nightmare when a rapist stalks the route.

Temporality is another important aspect of the mobility nexus (Sheller 2011). Mobilities involve the analysis of change in complex systems, 'neither perfectly ordered nor anarchic' (Sheller and Urry 2006: 216, citing Capra 2002, Urry 2003). Orderly disorder may suddenly disintegrate into chaos and trigger significant change in daily mobility patterns when disaster strikes – the death of a family member, a traffic accident, street mugging and rape all present significant examples. More commonly, we see a pattern of change as a result of small repetitions: gradually, possibly over a period of years, a tipping point may be reached, as will be illustrated with reference to school drop-out in Chapter 3.

Contextualizing embedded daily movements within a politics of mobility

In the new mobilities paradigm, power relations - the way mobility is socially structured, embedded and coded - clearly play a central role. 'Mobility and control over mobility both

reflect and reinforce power. Mobility is a resource to which not everyone has an equal relationship' (Sheller and Urry 2006: 211, citing Skeggs 2004: 49) or, as Cresswell (2010: 21) puts it, it is 'a resource that is differentially accessed'. The politics of mobility is at least as complex in Africa as in other regions of the world, but it offers an effective frame within which to contextualise many aspects of young people's daily movements for education, household work, livelihoods, health and social interaction. Moreover, seemingly highly local, everyday mobilities need to be considered within broader networks of power relations that potentially extend beyond the local moment to encompass regional, national and global political economy influences.

Core chapters of this book (on education, work, play, health, transport) consider the diverse and sometimes pernicious ways in which power interacts with key factors such as gender, age, socio-economic conditions and household composition to shape mobility potential and practice. Mobility may reflect and confer both advantage and disadvantage. It can be both a source and manifestation of status, as we see in the case of youth who conduct mobility performances on the streets of Accra, Blantyre and Mthatha with substantial flair (Porter et al. 2010; see also Ferguson 1999: 114; Lee 2004) and, conversely, a potential source of exploitation and degradation, as exemplified by young charcoal transporters in rural Malawi (Chapter 4).

In an African context, we also need to give particular consideration to the converse of mobility. Tracking the power of discourses and practices associated with mobility is vitally important if we are to understand how *immobility* is created (Sheller and Urry 2006). As discussed further in the next section, gender is one of the strongest elements interacting with power relations in the African mobility nexus for the production of relative immobility (Porter 2008, 2011). The power relations at play are such that, for many young people, especially girls once they reach puberty, movement beyond the highly localised sphere of the compound and its immediate neighbourhood can be a much rarer event than in Western contexts.

In order to fine-tune accounts of the social relations that involve the production and distribution of power, Cresswell (2010) breaks mobility into six constituent parts, each with a politics which can be used to differentiate people and things into hierarchies of mobility: *motive force* (why the movement is being made; whether it is free or forced), *velocity* (both

faster and slower speeds may be associated with exclusivity or the reverse), *rhythm* (as part of the social order; obligation; calculation; an aesthetics of ‘correct’ mobility; a possible emphasis on temporality), *route* (the channelling of movement; production of ‘correct mobilities’ through the delineation of routes; connectivity), *experience* (how moving feels) and *friction* (i.e. whether stopping is a forced or free choice). This typology works well for contemporary Africa, where privileged mobile subject positions sit side by side with the underprivileged, with immobility and with regulation. It will be appropriate to reflect back on the significance of these components for individual strands of the study at various points in the thematic chapters.

Aspects of critical social theory, focused as it is on the oppositions, conflicts and contradictions in contemporary society, can offer some assistance in the theoretical elaboration and conceptualisation of the complex power relations inherent in children and young people’s mobility in Africa. It also requires us to consider the diverse ways in which power relations interact with factors such as gender, age, socio-economic conditions and household composition to shape mobility potential and practice in different situations. In a Western context, Kallio (2007) draws attention to young people’s autonomous political potential as reflected by their everyday lived experiences and practices and, in particular, the tactics they may employ to promote their own objectives (and for which mobility may be a central enabling feature, especially where it involves escape; see also Ilan 2012). Young people’s subversive tactical manoeuvres (following de Certeau’s definition, 1984: 29) to avoid surveillance or unwanted tasks can occasionally be uncovered in diverse African contexts, as will be demonstrated, but are more often masked by convincing bodily performances of conformity. In Chapter 4, with respect to portage, we see how their obedient orderly bodies (laden with pots, packages and bowls), so often observed walking carefully, in line, along bush paths and rural roads, are central to production and reproduction in many African households (whether carrying water, wood, farm produce, waste etc.). Similarly, groups of children en route for school (Chapter 3), can be observed keeping closely together at the behest of parents (who say they do not have time to accompany them).

In some cases – possibly encouraged by threats, stories and rumours in which supernatural forces play a strong role - surveillance appears to be no longer necessary. It has been replaced by internalised self-regulation (of a type which resonates strongly with Foucault’s

concept of governmentality), such that no external social control seems to be required to police young people's movements (see Vaz and Bruno 2003, de Certeau 1984: xiv, for further elaboration of this theme in Western contexts). The potential sociabilities of travel, which may be lauded in some situations (Lyons and Urry 2005; Urry 2007) are by no means innocent in this regard. Internalised self-regulation is particularly the case for young girls, and may have significant implications for their lives and life chances, a point developed later in this chapter and subsequently (notably in Chapter 5).

Walking: its conceptual and methodological importance

Although young people take various modes of transport, on occasion, from bicycles to minibuses and taxis (and report on their related experiences and tactics, albeit principally as motor vehicle passengers; see Chapter 8), walking plays a particularly strong part in the mobilities story presented here. For children and young people across Africa, it is usually the dominant mode of travel and encompasses a majority of their mobile experiences: it thus logically forms a key focus of mobility-focused research with children. Walking has very different connotations than those narratives around freedom, agency or its health-giving and anti-obesity value which often prevail in Western societies (at least among affluent, middle class adults) (see de Certeau 1984; Thrift 2004; Cresswell 2010). Certainly, for most children in Africa, in the absence of alternative modes, it is more commonly viewed as a necessary but wearisome evil than as a health-giving exercise.

The everyday practice of walking, especially outside the city, received little attention as a focus of academic enquiry among social scientists until recently: it has also tended to be marginalised in transport studies. However, studies which set walking within a psycho-social frame have begun to demonstrate its strong potential as a device for social scientists to explore such issues as embodiment, place-making and materiality and the linkages between them. As Ingold and Vergunst (2008:1) persuasively argue, walking has vital social significance across the globe, since social relations 'are not enacted *in situ*, but are paced out along the ground'. Hodgson (2012) observes (in a UK context) that although walking (and its associated encountering attributes) is often characterised as unskilled, and straightforward, in fact it not only requires practical geographical skills in land-marking and navigating but also social competencies and strategies that are highly dynamic and situated (especially where coupled with use of the mobile phone).

This also applies to the African context, where walking frequently demands additional embodied skills, such as carrying a heavy load on the head (especially for girls). High temperatures, long distances, uneven unsurfaced tracks and footwear issues may add to the texture of the walk and bring significant challenges. The technology of footwear, as Ingold (2004) observes, has a significant place in this walking world. Although the majority of children I have interviewed in recent years have worn shoes, these are not infrequently removed on long walks across uneven terrain, to conserve their condition for as long as possible. Exhaustion, fatigue and pain are emotions met more commonly in the African walking world.

The unconscious, everydayness of walking may be further jarred by specific, unanticipated and unwelcome, disruptions – ‘perforation of the ordinary by the extraordinary’ (Binnie et al. 2007:168). While efforts may have been made to identify the easiest and safest travel pattern (pleasant social encounters, safe and agreeable accompaniment), unforeseen interruptions can turn into moments of crisis which require urgent action. Encounters with rapidly rising streams; finding the route blocked by a street gang; meeting a large snake, a witch, a ghost – these are some of the more frightening disruptions of journeys recounted by young respondents.

Because walking dominates the mobile lives of young people, the development of a methodological approach which reflects and can actually benefit from this fact seems logical. Many of the young people one may wish to speak to are extremely busy – they need to go to collect water, take messages, go to farm, hurry home from school. Moreover, they are often (at least initially) extremely shy and find direct eye-to-eye engagement with outside researchers difficult. Having experimented with walking interviews in different contexts and with different age groups over time, this has become a core method when interviewing young people, as will be elaborated in Chapter 2.

Gendered young lives in Africa: thinking about age, gender and mobility in the everyday

Age is a delineating marker in this book. The focus is principally on children and young people aged from around seven or eight years old up to the late-teens. This age group

encompasses a population which is of school-going age, but is also commonly already well integrated into family enterprises in African contexts (Reynolds 1991). It is thus a group for whom mobility seems potentially very important, yet – as noted earlier – one which has received very little attention in the transport literature on Africa. Additional perspective is provided at various points by consulting a slightly older cohort: young people in their early to mid-20s who, by this stage in their life-course, may be transitioning to adulthood. Here, a life-history approach facilitates some investigation of the extent to which the mobility opportunities and constraints of their earlier years are perceived to be affecting their current lives and life chances.

Definitions of childhood and youth are difficult, especially in an African context where young people are often expected to work and take on social responsibilities from a very early age. The two terms ‘children’ and ‘young people’ are used interchangeably in the book. The term ‘youth’ is used less often, and with some care, because it seems to have become associated in wider African society more specifically with young men, and with an age range which can extend from the early teens into the mid-30s, i.e. to the point at which full adult responsibilities are perceived to have been fully adopted (perhaps because the young man has children of his own). Durham (2000:116) considers youth relationally, rather than as a specific age group or cohort; a ‘social “shifter”’, borrowing a term from linguistics that ‘relates the speaker to a relational, or indexical, context’, thus situating encounters in a ‘social landscape of power, rights, expectations, and relationships’. De Boeck and Honwana (2005:6) suggest that a social category of ‘youth’, caught between childhood and adulthood, and associated with opposition and anti-structural, counter-hegemonic practices did not even exist in Africa until recently. Certainly, it is only over the last decade that youth have become a clear focus of social enquiry, in conjunction with observed changes in age-related and inter-generational power dynamics (De Boeck and Honwana, 2005:5-7).

Where cultural constructions traditionally tended to emphasize the lowly position of young people in family hierarchies, and the importance of respecting and obeying elders, these are now increasingly interposed with images of unruly and potentially destructive youth, vulnerable to political manipulation, especially in urban contexts (van Dijk, 1998; Comaroff & Comaroff, 1999; Durham, 2000). As Barker (2009) suggests, age and mobility can recursively reproduce one another, in the course of young people’s everyday lives.

Nevertheless, mobility potential and its actualisation, over time, may play an important role in the development of new (age-related) power dynamics in Africa. Mobility is also, very often, a key element in the process by which young people make significant steps forward along their life course towards adulthood, as field evidence will demonstrate.

In a mobilities context, it is not only age *per se* that is significant but, above all, the intersection of age with gender, for this substantially affects young people's agency. Gender is a factor of central significance in understanding the patterns and underlying politics of mobility operating among young people. Throughout this book, daily movements for education, household work, livelihoods, health and social interaction are contextualized within a politics of mobility, such that mobility is not only socially structured and coded, but also pervasively embodied and gendered. As Cresswell and Uteng (2008:1) observe, the interactions between gender and mobilities are inevitably complex, since both concepts are *'infused with meaning, power and contested understandings. The concept of gender does not operate in a binary form. It is never given but constructed through performative reiteration.....How people move (where, how fast, how often etc.) is demonstrably gendered and continues to reproduce gendered power hierarchies'*. How African girls and boys move – their bodily comportment and associated speed- has great significance, being both affected by and affecting the gendered politics of mobility. The body and gender are mutually constituted through the repeated enactment of appropriate gender performance (Butler 1993). As Bourdieu (1990) observed, practices come to be embodied and naturalised as a consequence of learned 'habitus', where gender is embodied through reiterated practices. Men and women's bodily comportment- ways of walking, carrying, demonstrations of bodily deference or disdain- are, for Bourdieu, learned through the body via practical involvement and observation: through the ways in which children imitate the gestures and actions of adults, engage in work or daily practices appropriate to their age, sex, class and so on. Gender habitus can thus be particularly strongly related to the prevailing sexual division of labour.

Internalised dispositions of comportment and speed are impacted not only by gendered patterns of work in the African context – especially load carrying, which is increasingly, with age, a female task - but also by play (which tends to be approached and enjoyed rather differently by the two genders, and according to age). This happens despite the seeming potential in play for chance-taking and disengagement from mechanisms of social control (see Goffman 1967, Punch 2000, Vannini 2011). Bodily comportment and speed of travel, in

turn, impact back on social standing and the potential to grow in stature as a community member: the study of load-carrying is especially demonstrative of the damaging role which servile bodily comportment confers (chapter 4). Following Goffman (1977), one of the key ways in which gender is given significance in society is by the process of institutional reflexivity: the social environment is organised in such a way as to make whatever ‘natural’ sex differences there are significant. Social situations give gender expression through ‘displays’, a process that leads to the socialisation and institutionalisation of gender differences. The *performance* of gender, in this sense, is a product of deep-seated institutional practices taking on a ritualised form which affirms beliefs about the differential human nature of the two sexes (Williams and Bendelow, 1998: 60; Flanary 2004). Differences between male and female bodily actions in activities such as load-carrying are not simply a show or ‘performance’, a conscious acting out of femininity or masculinity, but rather they are *embedded and largely subconscious dispositions of the body*, reflecting wider social and cultural expectations. Connell (1987: 86) observes that, ‘our bodies grow and work, flourish and decay, in social situations that produce bodily effects’ (a point developed very effectively by Flanary, 2004, with reference to adult women’s load carrying practices in northern Ghana).

Comportment, speed and regularity of movement are certainly extremely important signifiers of gendered mobility in many contexts; the *where* of gendered mobility adds a further critical dimension with enormous significance for the life chances of young people. The spatiality of girls’ travel in Africa can be remarkably different in very many respects from that of boys, once puberty is in sight. At this point, adult suspicions and fears of growing sexuality and desire among their young charges may become increasingly entangled with convenient notions of appropriate behaviour for each sex. Thus, boys’ spatial horizons in their teens often expand, while those of girls contract, as Katz (1991, 1993, 2004), demonstrated in her Sudanese village studies.

The reasons for this may not only revolve around the (oft stated) concerns of male family members regarding the vulnerability of girls to sexual and other attacks: suspicions of their potential for promiscuity may also come into play, while gender divisions of labour (which typically place great emphasis on female labour contributions to household reproduction) have widespread implications, particularly for girls’ school attendance (Porter 2011). Studies of the constraints on girls’ education tends to emphasise factors other than travel to

school, but a small number of detailed analyses which include some consideration of travel (notably Avotri et al. 1999, for Ghana) have pointed to its strong significance in both enrolment and attendance patterns. The data presented in Chapter 3 bring further breadth and depth to such analyses through the incorporation of a highly child-centred approach.

Of course, physical mobility is not necessarily desirable of itself: it is often required principally due to the lack of geographical proximity of schools, other services and jobs. One of the more depressing images of rural youth mobility in the literature is of young men in Western Kenya ‘tarmacking’: moving endlessly to and fro between village and town in search of work (Prince 2006). Bryceson’s (2006) report about the growing incorporation of transactional sex in *ganyu* labour contracts made by Malawian girls and women for basic foodstuffs since the 2001-2 famine (because these now often entail travel and overnight stays outside the village) also brings to the fore a very negative perspective on mobility. Such lengthy journeys raise particular issues for young girls. Across southern Africa, the high risk to youth of teasing, bullying and rape as they travel, often – but certainly not wholly - directed at young girls, has been widely reported (for instance in Zimbabwe and Eastern Cape, South Africa on the journey to school; see Leach et al. 2000:15, Potgeiter et al. 2006) and is raised by many field informants. Arguably, this is just one manifestation of behaviours associated with a wider crisis of masculinities. While particularly evident in southern Africa, where it exhibits diverse features and challenges, it is of growing concern worldwide (Porter 2013). The extent and ways in which harassment and the threat of gender-based violence influences travel patterns and practices and the implications for gendered life trajectories is explored in depth in Chapters 3, 4 and 5.

Relationality and the significance of household composition for mobility patterns

The relationalities of mobility have particular significance when thinking about African household composition: so much mobility is contingent on the movements of others in the household. Who moves? Who can stay? Who has to stay? These are all key questions that we need to consider carefully when examining the mobility of young people (Adey and Bissell, in interview with Urry, 2010). Often the answers will be directly associated with the presence or absence of other household members and their relative power to move or stay put (and consequent requirements of youth to move or stay at their behest). In such cases the so-called ‘gifting’ of travel time by young people to their elders may be compelled, rather than

proffered freely (in direct opposition to Jain and Lyon's 2008 concept of pleasurable and pleasure-giving gifting, whether for desired support to social networks, or the more intrinsic benefits of a future generation). It is important to consider relative mobility deprivation and the associated resentments and inter-generational tensions it generates from a young person's viewpoint, though it is also necessary to bear in mind that for older people, especially the very old, a loss of power and growing vulnerability with age can also generate tensions with the young (as in Porter, Tewodros et al., 2013, regarding rural Tanzania; Porter, Hampshire et al. 2015).

The relationality between mobilities of youth and old age take on a special resonance in sub-Saharan Africa because so many young people are resident with older carers, as a growing literature illustrates (e.g. Ingstad 2004; Schatz, Ogunmefun 2007; HAI 2007; Kamya, Poindexter 2009; Ssengonzi 2009). As Howard et al. (2006) show for Zimbabwe, foster caregivers of children are disproportionately elderly, female and poor. This is evidenced by survey data from 2007/8 in the CM study (see Chapter 2), when approximately 20% of 3000 child respondents surveyed lived with people other than their parents. In South Africa, Malawi and Ghana respectively, 14%, 9% and 9% lived with grandparents (usually grandmother alone); the remainder lived with other relatives/foster parents, many of whom were older people.

In many contexts, parents move to town or to another region, to search for an improved livelihood, and will choose to leave their children with grandparents; or, if living in a rural area with limited educational opportunities, may send their children to town for access to better education (Hampshire et al. 2015). The era of HIV/AIDS has also left many grandparents supporting and caring for grandchildren (HAI 2007). There are approximately 2 million orphaned and vulnerable children in Tanzania, for instance: 50% of these are in households headed by older people, predominantly older women (UNICEF 2006). Here, the intersecting mobilities of the two generations reflect complex interdependencies, as older people care for grandchildren, while locally resident grandchildren assist, in turn, with older people's access to goods and services, including medicines and domestic needs. This symbiotic relationship between generations allows many to cope in Tanzania in difficult situations (notably the need for young adults –the parents - to migrate to the city to find work, and the high incidence of HIV/AIDS; Porter, Tewodros et al. 2013). This pattern is probably reproduced across much of rural Africa, though evidence is lacking.

Fostering, where a child lives in a different household from its mother, has a long tradition in Africa, especially West Africa. It is not only a response to needs for provision of child-care in the context of orphanhood or parental migrations as noted above, but occurs in a range of other circumstances (UNICEF 2006, Schenk et al 2008). In West Africa, it is often a means of providing domestic assistance to childless family members and older relatives without family at home, or even to unrelated people. The exchange of a child is perceived, in some cases, as an important route to consolidating social networks (Bledsoe and Brandon 1992). In urban contexts it may be set within an arrangement to enable the fostered child from a rural area to obtain better (often secondary) schooling than that available in the home location (at least in theory) (Serra 2009). In the CM study we encountered many cases of fostered children whose daily mobility was less beneficial to their lives than that of children who resided with their birth parents, as will be discussed with particular reference to children's portage work.

Conclusion

This introductory chapter has presented some of the key underlying themes and issues which are central to ensuing discussions in this book: its emphasis on an interdisciplinary approach to mobility, drawing on the 'new mobilities paradigm'; the way daily movements need to be contextualised within a politics of mobility; the central role of one mode of transport - walking - to much of the movement which will be explored; and reflections on some of the key contextual factors and relationalities of mobility that we can anticipate will help shape young people's lives and their interactions with other age groups.

The next chapter moves to methodology and field sites, firstly tracing the development of the child-centred approach to mobilities research, which has strongly informed the collection of empirical data presented in ensuing chapters, and then introducing the main research locations. Following on from these two chapters, we can turn to the empirical data and explore how, in various thematic areas, mobility shapes the lives and life course of so many young people. This is a moving issue, not merely in terms of mobility *per se*, but for the insights it presents into the hopes and fears of an aspirant new generation – and one on whose successful transition to a secure adulthood Africa's future depends.

A note about authorship

This book was written by Gina Porter, but the material presented is built from, and around, the work of well over forty academic and practitioner researchers and seventy ‘young researchers’ (see Chapter 2). While it has not been possible to name everyone as ‘co-authors’, it is important to recognise their input.

The named co-authors are firstly Kate Hampshire, who worked with me in setting up and conducting the pilot (qualitative and survey) studies and database in the Child Mobility (CM) project, and subsequently focused on analysing data relating to health, fostering and sexuality; Albert Abane who first contributed to elements of the Gomoa (Ghana) project, then to the pilot studies in India and Ghana, and subsequently co-ordinated the Ghana CM country study; Alister Munthali and Elsbeth Robson, who coordinated the Malawi CM study; and Mac Mashiri who contributed to the India and South Africa pilot studies, then coordinated the South Africa CM study.

In Ghana work on market access, IMT and the role of children (the foundational Gomoa studies), was conducted with Frank Owusu Acheampong and Kathrin Blaufuss (my Research Assistants in the IMT project), with support from Albert Abane.

More recent contributions in Ghana, in the CM study, came from a large number of teaching staff and researchers at the University of Cape Coast (led by Albert Abane): Ekow Afful-Wellington (who sadly died during the project), Samuel Asiedu Owusu, Kobina Esia-Donkoh, Samuel Agblorti, Regina Obilie Odei, Mercy Otsin and Augustine Tanle.

In Malawi, the CM study Research Assistants (henceforth RAs) (led by Alister Munthali and Elsbeth Robson) were Linny Kachama, Bryan Mkandawire, Matthews Nkosi and Bernie Zakeyo, Meya Mkandawire, Faith Hackim, Lucia Desire, Maurice Zulu, Kisinger Chima, Joseph Chiwaula, Chakambira Khaila, Elizabeth Shawa, Susan Liundi, Khetase Chirwa, Albertina Nsongolo.

In South Africa’s Eastern Cape I worked initially with Zodwa Philipps-Howard from the University of Transkei (now Walter Sisulu University). The CM study in South Africa (co-ordinated by Mac Mashiri) was assisted by Sipho Dube, Goodhope Maponya, Andisiwe Bango, Nokholo Hlezupondo, Busi Luwaca and Noma Mlomo.

In India, we learned from CWC Bangalore, in particular P. Lolichen and Nandana Reddy.

A chance meeting (at an African Studies conference) with Michael Bourdillon was especially fortuitous in helping to develop the CM child researcher training, which he led in Malawi and South Africa.

In IFRTD, Priyanthi Fernando was instrumental in making the link to CWC; Marinke van Riet and Kate Czuczman supported preparation of the child researcher booklet.

The 70 young researchers who played a crucial role in the CM study were as follows: *Ghana*: Cyril Agbley, Doreenda Agyeman, Daniel Aidoo- Bossah, Emmanuel Cornelius Ampong, Lois Antwe, Exonoyski Ntim Asare, Emmanuel Owusu Danquah, Evans Egyir, Eoudia Kumi-Yeboah, Joshua Opoku, Emmanuel Teye Owusu, Lawrence Tabiaa, Charity Tawiah, Dorothy Tawiah, Victoria Yeboah. *Malawi*: Manes Banda, Alie Bwanali, Tendai Chiwawula, Lawrence Godfrey, Mary Kamphangwe, Dalitso Kaunda, Gift Kawanga, Bernadetta Kuchonde, Christopher Lyson, Ludovico Magola, Esther Malimusi, Christopher Mbeza, Anthony Merrick, Brasho Moffart, Towera Mwaungulu, Smart Ng'oma, Alinafe Ntewa, Tionge Phiri, Georgina Pwere, Thokozani Tembo, Nenani Thinbo, Micklina Welesani, Monica William, Tisunge Zuwaki. *South Africa*: Nokulunga Bara, Boniswa Protect Chauke, Buhle Dambuza, Noluvo Diko, Xhalisile Elliot, Kholwakazi Joseph, Nthahla Kelem, Tholakele Kelem, Vuyiseka Keyisi, Esrom Kgapola, Hope Lehabe Zintle Mapetshana, Nelly Mathebula, Nosiphiwo Mbanzi, Sannie Molefe, Matshidiso Motaung, Zimkhita Moyakhe, Mzoyolo Matsili, Ntlatywa Mlondolozi, Sello Mothupi, Zanaxolo Mseswa, Thembinkosi Msimanga, MandilakhMtambeki, Sinathi Ndamashe, Felicia Ntuli, Odwa Noraqa, Christina Ramongane, Noah Setshedi, Wisdom Shuma, Ncumisa Thungilizwe.

In UK, the CM steering group - Janet Townsend and Nina Laurie (Newcastle University) and Marinke van Riet (IFRTD) – provided sound advice throughout the project.

All of these people have made essential, much valued, contributions towards the research on which this book is based.

